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SUBJECT: PROSECUTOR GENERAL DATA SKETCHY BUT SHOWS MOST  
LABOR MURDERS NOT DUE TO UNION TIES

REF: BOGOTA 6862

¶1. The Colombian Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) reports that since 2001, it has resolved 59 cases of violence against labor union members, resulting in the sentencing of 126 individuals. Eleven of the cases, leading to 20 convictions, were prosecuted by the special subunit set up by the Fiscalia last October to investigate and prosecute labor crimes.

¶2. The Fiscalia told us that in most of the 59 cases, the motives for the crimes were not due to the victims' union affiliation. Fiscalia analysts reviewed case notes from regional prosecutors and compiled the motives identified by the judges in the cases. In the eleven cases in which the judges did not specify a cause, the analysts determined the motive based on their evaluation of the case notes. The analysts found that sixteen stemmed from domestic or personal disputes, thirteen were robberies, and nine involved individuals killed by the FARC, ELN or paramilitaries due to their suspected cooperation with a rival group. Three cases involved kidnappings for ransom, two resulted from indiscriminate FARC attacks, two were attacks on prosecutors, and one was killed by a rival political candidate. One was caught in a crossfire between combatant groups, one was a victim of a hate crime against drug users, and two were extrajudicial killings by Colombian security forces. The courts found the victim's union membership was the motive in only nine, or 15 percent, of the cases.

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